

Appendix 7

NMAC Guidelines for Managing Large Fixed Wing Airtankers, Exclusive Use Helicopters (except National T2 Helicopters), Smokejumper Aircraft, Lead Planes and Aerial Supervision Modules

Note: At this time the federal agencies' response to the recently released National Transportation Safety Bureau (NTSB) report regarding large airtankers is uncertain. However, if a decision is made that substantively affects the availability of nationally contracted large airtankers for the 2004 fire season, we will develop a contingency plan and promptly issue an update to these guidelines as appropriate.

Strategic Principles

- Initial action fire suppression is the primary mission for airtankers.
- Airtankers will be pre-positioned based on NMAC strategic considerations and prioritization criteria as stated in the NMAC Preparedness Strategy, 2004.
- Assignment of these resources to non-initial action fires, regardless of complexity, will be on a case by case basis. The following criteria will be used:
 1. Imminent threat to human life including occupied structures.
 2. Imminent threat to communities, community infrastructure, historically significant cultural resources, commercial businesses, and principal residences.
 3. Threats to other structures and improvements such as seasonal homes, cabins and high value outbuildings.
 4. Threats to natural resources.
 5. Threats to low value structures.
- Requests for use of these aviation resources on non-initial action fires must include the above criteria to enable dispatch centers to correctly allocate scarce resources.
- Use of retardant must be restricted to situations where ground forces are available and able to take advantage of the retardant drops.

Operational Procedures

- NICC will be delegated authority from NMAC to guide strategic deployment of airtankers.
- Unless a higher risk area is identified, large fixed wing airtankers will be initially positioned at the designated contract base in order to reduce costs.
- On the morning GACC/NICC conference call, daily assignments will be validated and aircraft reallocated as necessary. In the event of disagreement on the resource allocation, NICC will make the final decision.
- GACC/NICC afternoon conference calls will determine aviation requirements and position strategy for the following day. NICC will be the final decision maker, if necessary. In the event of disagreement on resource allocation, NICC will make the final decision.

- GACCs will establish priorities when competition for aviation resources exists. GACC to GACC initial action agreements will continue to be utilized per the National Interagency Mobilization Guide (Chapter 13.3).
- When requested to make an airtanker available to move to a location of greater risk, the local unit or GACC will do so without hesitation.